



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
SPECIAL TOWN HALL MEETING OF THE
PROBATION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
WORKING GROUP
3041 WEST AVENUE K
LANCASTER, CA 93536**

Thursday, October 20, 2016

6:00 PM

AUDIO FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING (16-5516)

Attachments: [Audio](#)

Call to Order.

Member Meredith served as the Presiding Member of the Town Hall meeting and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Member Don Meredith and Member Jose Osuna

Absent: Chair Carol Chodroff, Vice Chair Alex Johnson and Member Gabriella Holt

1. Opening Remarks and Introductions. (16-5091)

Member Meredith and Osuna made self-introductions and informed members of the public of their background and experience and why each of them were chosen to sit on the Probation Oversight Commission Working Group. Member Meredith informed the members of the public that speaker cards are available and encouraged the public to address the Working Group and convey their experience with the Probation Department so that the Working Group can make informed recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

2. Explanation of the composition, function and responsibility of the Probation Oversight Commission Working Group. (16-4985)

Member Meredith explained that the goal for the Working Group is to provide a recommended mission statement, vision and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors detailing how best to provide civilian oversight of the Probation Department. Member Meredith also stated that the Working Group has identified real issues and concerns that have been brought forward by the public and that it is the Working Group's intention to be as transparent and accountable as possible.

3. Review of the Working Document Draft Recommendations:

- Mission and Vision Statement
- Findings
- Recommendations:
 - Merge, Replace, Reconfigure or Expand Existing Entities
 - Identify Overlaps & Gaps; Define Coordination
 - Identify Investigative & Monitoring Needs
 - Determine Relationship of Juvenile & Adult
 - Define Commission Structure, Authority, Responsibilities

(16-4986)

Member Osuna provided a brief overview of the mission statement and vision and explained that in addition to the recommendations the Working Group will submit their "Findings" to the Board of Supervisors. Findings are the issues that fall outside the scope of the Working Group as stipulated by the Board of Supervisors, however, are significant enough to be considered by the Board and addressed by the future Oversight Commission.

Member Osuna also reviewed aspects of the Working Document Recommendations including the possibility of replacing or merging duplicative commissions and oversight bodies; identifying any overlaps or gaps among entities relative to oversight to ensure a more efficient oversight mechanism than what currently exists. Member Osuna also informed the public that the Working Group would consider what type of authority is required in order to identify, investigate and monitor the Probation Department, and determine the possible separation of the adult/juvenile probation process. Member Osuna also advised the public that the Working Group would be considering the structure, staffing needs, responsibilities and what kind of authority the proposed Commission should have.

Member Osuna also reiterated that the recommendations are currently fluid and are being revised based on crucial information coming to light through public dialog and how important it is for the public to voice their concerns to the Working Group.

Attachments: [Recommendations-As of 10-18-16](#)

- 4.** Opportunity for members of the public to address the Working Group on items of interest that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Working Group.
(16-4988)

Tom Holland, Los Angeles County Probation Department Officer, addressed the Working Group. Mr. Holland shared his personal experience as a former probationer and now a Probation Officer. Mr. Holland stressed the need to motivate the youth after their release from Probation. Mr. Holland stated that it is important for the youth to continue their education and that many are unaware that their records can be sealed through a simple process. Mr. Holland indicated that the youths that he sees in the camps are lost as to what they want to do in the future upon release. They are completely unaware of services available to them. Mr. Holland also mentioned that currently within the Department, he has observed many inexperienced staff with increased caseloads which contributes to the lack of care and service when dealing with the youth. Mr. Holland advised the Working Group that he thrived under a regimented program that provided life skills, structure and educational skills, which he views as non-existent now. Mr. Holland indicated that he sees the youths at the camps with no hope and direction.

In response to Mr. Holland's comments, Member Meredith indicated that the Working Group intends to offer a recommended structure for the Oversight Commission which will include individuals with expertise in the many fields that can best serve the needs of probationers during and after incarceration.

Lori Gilroy, Antelope Valley Youth Build (AVYB) addressed the Working Group. Ms. Gilroy provided a brief overview of the job placement services that AVYB provides including the fire-fighting services that the 16 to 24-year olds participate in. Ms. Gilroy spoke on restorative justice and the need for skilled workers with their MSW degrees to staff the camps. Ms. Gilroy stressed the importance of bringing back probationers into the community by making them active members of society with the help of community service through Community Based Organizations. Ms. Gilroy

stated that often times, once probationers are released, they are not aware of services or programs that are available to them. Ms. Gilroy also indicated that there are many programs that could help probationers but go unfunded.

Lee D'Errico, Director of Public Safety for the City of Lancaster, addressed the Working Group. Mr. D'Errico stressed the need for better collaboration between the community and the Probation Department. Mr. D'Errico stated that listening to feedback from the community is an important aspect of oversight. Mr. D'Errico also mentioned the difficulty of receiving funding for Community Based Organizations that offer wrap-around programs and services to those re-entering the community. Mr. D'Errico voiced his concern regarding the Probation Department's perceived lack of concern for the Antelope Valley and that the types of services that are available in the rest of the County are just not available in the North County area. Mr. D'Errico indicated that because of the location of Lancaster and Palmdale from the rest of the County, the CBOs that do exist have a "go-it-alone" feeling of isolation because they are under staffed, under funded and feel as if the Probation Department does not have an interest. Mr. D'Errico informed the Working Group that juveniles are being arrested six and seven times for residential burglary before they see the inside of a juvenile court, and that they are being diverted at that level. Mr. D'Errico indicated that there are uncollected funds for vandalism alone that is owed the City of Lancaster in the amount of \$2,000,000 in un-enforceable repayment agreements because the Probation Department decides administratively what they will and will not enforce.

Mr. D'Errico informed the Working Group of the anti-truancy efforts by the schools and indicated that the Antelope Valley School Superintendent, Cheri Kreitz was in attendance to observe the process. Mr. D'Errico also stressed the need for collaboration and assistance with the Probation Department.

Member Osuna inquired as to how Mr. D'Errico thinks the Oversight Commission should be structured and how should it function. Mr. D'Errico indicated that the community and the agencies in the area need to have a voice on the front-end and have a nexus to the Probation Department with a good working relationship. Mr. D'Errico indicated that the Antelope Valley has the largest number of AB109 participants than any other area of the County, and 70% of the suitable placements for foster youths is within the Antelope Valley, and yet they get the least amount of attention from the Probation Department.

Additional discussion ensued regarding victim's rights, juvenile rights, educational needs and staffing needs and misappropriation of staff and promotion by test and not by expertise or experience.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment. (16-4989)

Member Osuna thanked the City of Lancaster and Antelope Valley College for hosting the Working Group. Member Osuna also thanked all community members who participated in the Town Hall discussion.

Member Meredith indicated that he is an appointee from the Fifth District and will provide his email address if any member of the public would like to contact him directly.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.